

December 19, 2008

TO: Steve Chenoweth, Senior Field Representative
Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE)

FROM: Teresa Parsons
Director's Review Program Supervisor

SUBJECT: Roseann Dickson v. Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-07-009

On October 23, 2008, I conducted a Director's review conference at the Department of Personnel, 2828 Capitol Boulevard, Olympia, Washington, concerning the allocation of Roseann Dickson's position. Present at the Director's review conference were you and Ms. Dickson; Pamela Pelton, Classification & Compensation Manager, and Lynne Glad Human Resources Manager, represented DSHS.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to September 28, 2007, the date Ms. Dickson requested reallocation of her position. As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review conference, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of Ms. Dickson's assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude her position is properly allocated to the Mail Processing-Driver classification.

Background

On September 28, 2007, DSHS's Classification & Compensation Unit received Ms. Dickson's updated Position Description Form, requesting reallocation to the Mail Processing-Driver Lead classification. At that time, Ms. Dickson's position (# VF38) had been allocated as an Office Assistant 3. By letter dated October 8, 2007, Ms. Pelton informed Ms. Dickson the Mail Processing-Driver classification appropriately fit her position. The request to be reallocated as a Mail Processing-Driver Lead was denied.

Ms. Pelton determined that Ms. Dickson performed mail processing duties but had not been assigned lead worker responsibilities.

On November 6, 2007, the Department of Personnel received Ms. Dickson's request for a Director's review of DSHS's allocation determination.

Summary of Ms. Dickson's Perspective

Ms. Dickson asserts she is in charge of the mail room at Western State Hospital at least 51% of the time. Ms. Dickson acknowledges there is a lead worker position assigned to the mail room but contends she also leads other employees and oversees the entire mail operation when the lead worker is absent. Ms. Dickson states that half of her time is spent working in the post office and the other half delivering mail. Ms. Dickson asserts she performs the same duties as the lead worker and that she and the lead worker are scheduled to alternate days overseeing the functions in the post office. For example, Ms. Dickson explained that she works in the post office while the lead worker does the mail run, and when she does the mail run, the lead worker handles the post office functions. Ms. Dickson asserts she has responsibility for training and overseeing the other Mail Processing Driver position assigned to the mail room, as well as patients and employees on alternate assignment who work in the mail room processing mail. Ms. Dickson contends she has the same responsibilities for completing paperwork related to post office transactions and cash deposits. Ms. Dickson also contends she completes the patient payroll form for patients to receive pay for working in the mail room. Ms. Dickson believes the Mail Processing Driver Lead best describes the work assigned to her position.

Summary of DSHS's Reasoning

DSHS agrees that Ms. Dickson performs mail processing duties and acknowledges that Western State has a large volume of mail to process. DSHS also states that Ms. Dickson and the lead worker perform the retail functions of the post office. However, while Ms. Dickson may help train patients and temporary workers on light duty or alternate assignment, DSHS contends she has not been assigned lead responsibilities. DSHS asserts that it is not unusual for a lead worker to perform the same duties of the positions he/she leads but contends a lead worker has been designated lead responsibility for assigning, instructing, and checking the work of other employees. In this case, DSHS asserts there are three full-time employees assigned to the mail room, as indicated on the organizational chart. Of those three employees, DSHS states that one employee has been designated as the lead worker. DSHS contends Ms. Dickson's supervisor has not designated lead responsibility to her position and therefore, contends the Mail Processing-Driver is the appropriate classification.

Rationale for Director's Determination

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

The description of the Position Objective for Ms. Dickson's position includes the following (Exhibit B-1):

Receives and routes United States Postal (USPS)/Campus/Office mail and packages. Sorts incoming mail and sets up mail run twice daily. Delivers mail, packages, and varied distribution throughout the hospital campus. Logs incoming certified, registered, and insured mail. Handles retail sales of USPS stamps and money orders in USPS contract office. This includes nightly turn in of daily Postal sales. Prepares outgoing mail and determines most cost effective method using hospital postage meter machine. Assists in training Vocational Rehab Workers and prepare patient work hours for accounting. Provides feedback to treatment team on patients' progress. Advise mail senders of appropriate mailing methods, answer questions, and provide information.

On the Position Review Request Form, Ms. Dickson indicated that the majority of her work (70%) included processing, sorting, and distributing incoming/outgoing bulk and individual mail, inter-office mail and packages (Exhibit B-2). These duties are consistent with the PDF. Although the PDF indicates that Ms. Dickson instructs and checks the work of others, it does not indicate lead responsibility. Jack Baker, Offset Printer Operator Supervisor is Ms. Dickson's supervisor. The organizational chart shows Ms. Dickson's position (# VF38) and one Mail Processing Driver position under the Mailroom. Lenora Garrett, Mail Processing Lead, is identified as the lead worker, and Ms. Dickson indicated that she and Ms. Garrett were the two mail room workers who shared similar responsibilities.

The Department of Personnel (DOP) Classification Glossary defines *lead* as follows:

An employee who performs the same or similar duties as other employees in his/her work group and has the designated responsibility to regularly assign, instruct, and check the work of those employees.

While there is no doubt Ms. Dickson provides guidance and direction to others working in the mail room, she has not been assigned lead responsibility and does not regularly

assign work to other employees. Instead, the guidance Ms. Dickson provides is consistent with the following definition, also included in DOP's Classification Glossary:

Direct the work of others – Provide work guidance or direction but is NOT a “lead”; does NOT have the responsibility of assigning, instructing and checking the work of others on a regular and ongoing basis.

The definition for Mail-Processing-Driver Lead states:

Positions allocated to this level regularly assign, instruct, and check the work of others and independently oversee and perform mail services including sorting, processing, delivering, and collecting mail, and operating mail management system. Incumbents typically interpret department and institutional rules and regulations concerning mail operations, resolve complex customer problems, recommend cost effective mailing methods, and address other special or complex mailing requirements and needs.

The definition for Mail-Processing-Driver states:

Positions at this level independently perform mail services such as delivering, collecting and processing both foreign and domestic mail and resolving routine customer problems. Incumbents configure and operate routine and complex electronic mailing equipment, digital scanning and tracking equipment, and x-ray and biohazard scanners. When delivering and collecting mail, incumbents regularly operate pickup, panel, and other trucks up to one-ton capacity.

The duties and responsibilities assigned to Ms. Dickson's position fit the Mail-Processing Driver definition. While examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification. Both the Mail-Processing-Driver and Mail-Processing-Driver Lead classes indicate that typical work includes directing the work of lower-level staff and assuring mail quality control standards are met. However, the Mail-Processing-Driver Lead class also indicates that employees allocated as the lead will typically schedule and organize work for mailing services personnel and assign and oversee delivery routes, or in this case the mail run. As indicated on the organizational chart, Ms. Garrett has been assigned lead responsibility for the mail room.

It is clear Ms. Dickson is conscientious about her work and has made suggestions for process improvements in the mail room. A position's allocation, however, is not based on an evaluation of performance or an individual's ability to perform higher-level work. Rather, it is based on the majority of work assigned to a position. In this case, the Mail

Processing Driver classification best describes the work assigned to Ms. Dickson's position (# VF38).

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

c: Roseann Dickson
 Pamela Pelton, DSHS
 Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits